
PART II

Information Strategy

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Information Strategy (IS), together with the LABS (2004), will form part of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP). The purpose of the IS will be to set out how information can be effectively communicated to existing and potential users of bus services, at the right time and in the right place.
- 1.1.2 The IS seeks to make improvements to the quality and the provision of information for both the needs of current users and potential users. The IS identifies the required information and the appropriate ways in which it will be delivered, particularly in terms of quality and quantity.

1.2 Transport Act 2000

- 1.2.1 The Transport Act 2000 requires each local authority to develop a Public Transport Information Strategy.
- 1.2.2 For the purposes of the Act, "local bus information" means:
- Information about routes and timetabling of local services to, from and within the authority's area;
 - Information about fares for journeys on such local services; and
 - Such other information about facilities for disabled persons, travel concessions, connections with other public passenger transport services or other matters of value to the public as the authority consider appropriate in relation to their area.
- 1.2.3 Under the Act, the Local Authority is obliged to consult with organisations (representing users of local services) and the Traffic Commissioner for their area, prior to determining what information is required, and in what form.
- 1.2.4 Following agreement on what information is to be provided, the Act requires the local authority to ensure that it is publicly available and that operators are meeting the necessary standards. If an operator fails to provide satisfactory information, or to provide it in the required form, the local authority must first try to reach agreement that the operator will correct any shortcomings. Failing this, the authority can make the information available itself, either by publishing its own timetables or by arranging for them to be published by a third party. Any costs can be recovered from the operators by legal action, and the operator can be reported to the Traffic Commissioner, although this is viewed as a last resort.

2 POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 Regional Public Transport Strategy, June 2003

- 2.1.1 This is a strategic level document, which sets out the underlying principles that

apply to all forms of public transport, and identifies individual strategy components.

2.1.2 The Regional Public Transport Strategy sets out the elements of an information strategy to be considered, including:

- The Establishment of an all mode information centre for Wales;
- Development, in consultation with users and non-users, of a bus stop information profile that will establish minimum information requirements at stops throughout the region. This will be dependent upon location of the stop, and ensures that the information is easily understood, relevant, reliable and up-to-date;
- Production of a marketing strategy which will include development of real time information, investigation into user friendly information needs and a programme of publicity (including types of advertising campaigns, media to be used and timescales);
- Consideration of the development of a Travelwise ‘Hearts and Mind’ campaign; and
- Investigation of the adoption of a clear policy with regard to public information kiosks.

2.2 Vale of Glamorgan Local Transport Plan

2.2.1 With regards to public transport information; the LTP states that improving the availability and quality of public transport information is a key part of ensuring individuals have the ability to make informed choices about their travel decisions.

2.2.2 Policy 5 of the Local Transport Plan states:

“In co-operation with public transport operators and adjoining local authorities, the Council will seek to improve the availability and quality of public transport information.”

2.3 Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority Bus Strategy (2003)

2.3.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority Bus Strategy has the following information aspirations:

- To provide an up to date network of public information for tourism transport services.
- Development of a comprehensive map of the region, along with an up-to date user-friendly bus timetable. This will be downloadable via the Council’s website. It is also intended in the strategy, that an information booklet will be made available by following consultation with operators. As an interim measure six leaflets have already been produced covering the main sectors of the Vale.
- Investigation of the possible provision of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) at bus stops and major institutions such as colleges, schools and large

- companies.
- Agreements to be made with operators regarding the provision and maintenance of information at stops.
- Stops to be provided with bus stop flags.
- Where appropriate timetables will be stop specific – advance notice of timetable changes, will also be provided at bus stops.
- Council to work with operators to reduce the changes to services.
- Timetabled development for Public Transport Information Strategy in the next 12 months.

3 INFORMATION PROVISION

3.1 The Need for Information

- 3.1.1 Access to accurate public transport information is an essential element of a successful public transport network. Better information can help to attract regular car users onto public transport This can include not only the timetabling, but also better information provision at their nearest bus stop.
- 3.1.2 The provision of good quality travel information enables existing and potential passengers to make informed decisions about their travel. It can also improve passenger confidence and can lead to sustainable, repeat travel patterns.
- 3.1.3 Information requirements differ according to the stage of a journey, e.g. pre-travel information will be different to that provided during a trip. Information needs also vary depending upon whether people are regular bus users or not.

3.2 Consultation

- 3.2.1 Consultation with the public revealed a generally negative view of the current provision of information on local bus services - 50% of respondents rated current information provision as poor or very poor. Bus users felt that information was difficult to obtain in local areas, highlighting the fact that for many services a central information office in Cardiff alone was inconvenient. Furthermore, Traveline, as a service was deemed to be expensive with poor response times.
- 3.2.2 For the future, bus passengers seemed to prefer information on services through printed information at bus stops, printed leaflets and guides with RTPI at stops.
- 3.2.3 From the internal stakeholder consultation it was clear that a high priority should be given to providing better public transport information, including targeted investment.
- 3.2.4 Within external stakeholder consultation, Cardiff Bus felt the improvement of passenger information to be of high importance. The National Federation of Bus Users (NFBU) placed joint priority on trying to improve reliability of bus services and improving passenger information provision.

- 3.2.5 Within the Scrutiny Committee consultation process the provision of information was raised as a key issue and an area for high priority for funding. However, consultees outlined a 'walk before you can run' approach in getting the simple aspects of information provision correct before introducing high tech operations such as RTPI.
- 3.2.6 Keeping information up to date was outlined as a problem that could hinder the production of an authority wide bus timetable of all services.

3.3 Information Provision – Good Practice

- 3.3.1 Ultimately Information must be accessible to all members of society, adults, children and the elderly. It must be straightforward, legible and uncomplicated so that it can be easily understood. Information requirements of the visually impaired should be considered at all time and this includes making printed information available in alternative formats.
- 3.3.2 The provision of information should accord with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). This states that it is unlawful for a provider of services to discriminate against a disabled person:
 - (a) In refusing to provide, or deliberately not providing, to the disabled person any service which he provides, or is prepared to provide, to members of the public;
 - (b) In failing to comply with any duty imposed on him by section 21 in circumstances in which the effect of that failure is to make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the disabled person to make use of any such service;
 - (c) In the standard of service which he provides to the disabled person or the manner in which he provides it to him; or
 - (d) In the terms on which he provides a service to the disabled person.
- 3.3.3 This applies to a number of services including access to and provision of information.
- 3.3.4 Timetables should comply with the Code of Good Practice for Printed Timetable Information produced by the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers, copies of which can be downloaded from the ATCO web-site at www.atco.org.uk.
- 3.3.5 Up-to-date printed information for all modes of public transport serving the locality should be obtainable at a modest or preferably no cost to the user. This information should be provided at publicly accessible key locations e.g. libraries, bus stations and tourist information centres.
- 3.3.6 A single publication is most appropriate that lists the maps and timetables available, that explains how to obtain information on service changes and how to contact operators. The publication should also include information on taxis and community transport. Disabled passengers particularly value information on the accessibility of transport and this should be included in timetable publications. Information regarding public transport for disabled travellers should be made clear on timetables.

- 3.3.7 The use of coloured route maps and coloured network maps is an effective way of conveying information related to a particular journey concisely. Easy to read maps enable swift interpretation of information.
- 3.3.8 In order that customers can learn of changes, new timetables must be available at least 7 days before a service change.
- 3.3.9 Provision of on-bus information could be made available. This will clearly require co-operation with bus operators but could include:
- Fares information;
 - Information on the All Wales Concessionary Fares Scheme;
 - New timetable leaflets;
 - Traveline posters; and
 - Details of service changes.
 - Network Maps

3.4 Existing Information Provision

- 3.4.1 Traveline Cymru is a public transport service, which provides times and routes of all bus, coach, rail, ferry and air services in Wales. Their database now includes nearly all bus service timetables for Wales. It also includes information on the provision of all bus stops. Information is provided in both English and Welsh. Traveline also has a website (www.traveline.org.uk) which includes a journey planner. The Traveline telephone service is available every day (except Christmas Day and New Years day) from 0700 to 2200 hours. At present, all buses carry the Traveline contact details.
- 3.4.2 The Vale of Glamorgan Council's website also provides information on bus timetables (www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk). The website gives details of bus companies and their contact details as well as Traveline Cymru contact details. Bus timetable information is available as is information on service changes.
- 3.4.3 Traveline records show that there are 236 bus shelters in the Vale, most of which have display cases containing timetabled information. Maintenance of the shelters is undertaken as and when required. On the main corridors and where there is a dominant operator, the operator is responsible for timetable maintenance. Where there is more than one operator working a route there can be conflicts with respect to displaying appropriate timetables and maintaining accuracy. Presentation of information differs between operators. In certain locations, stop specific timetables, showing all operator services, have been prepared and are maintained by the Council. In the deeper rural Vale, where services are generally supported, the Authority has historically taken charge of maintaining cases at stops and the information contained in them.
- 3.4.4 Gradually, all bus stops are being named, although many services in the Vale of Glamorgan operate on a 'hail and ride' basis. Operators install bus flags, therefore the provision of information varies greatly.

- 3.4.5 There is an information kiosk available in Kings Square, Barry. However, this facility is operated by Cardiff Bus and has very limited opening hours.

3.5 Information Provision in the Vale of Glamorgan: The Way Forward

Pre-journey Information

- 3.5.1 Simple route map diagrams should be made available locally in the Vale (e.g. either a simple route diagram for each route, a consolidated diagram for each corridor booklet, or coloured town maps).
- 3.5.2 The quality of the Traveline service could be improved by setting up an answering service out of hours, having an updated message available during operational hours informing customers of queue times on the phone line and considering the introduction of a simple interactive menu for basic messages (such as ordering timetables).
- 3.5.3 There is also the need to agree with operators the means by which Traveline can be regularly provided with fare information on a more systematic basis.
- 3.5.4 Public consultation revealed the need for timetabled information to be available locally and that it be integrated between bus operators. However, through Scrutiny Committee discussions it was suggested that keeping information up to date in order to provide area wide timetables would be difficult. Further, although pre-journey information is available through services such as Traveline and via the Vale website, it was at times out of date, expensive to obtain and not the preferred source of information for the majority of those sampled.
- 3.5.5 Consultation would suggest that pre-journey information should be produced in the more traditional form of timetables in pamphlets available from local sources.
- 3.5.6 Key interchanges should also be considered for the installation of manned or automated information points.

Bus-stop Information

- 3.5.7 Timetable displays should be provided at the stop or shelter using modern, coloured printing standards in fonts and colours recommended by the RNIB clear print guidelines. Details are provided in the ATCO Printed Public Transport Information Code of Practice Guide. Timetables should show the start date of the most recent revision and include the date that the information is valid until. This will be subject to agreement with operators, to maintain service stability up to such date.
- 3.5.8 Regular cleaning, monitoring and fundamental repair of displays should be carried out, at least once a month depending on the location of the stop.
- 3.5.9 Approximate bus journey times, particularly from key trip generators/attractors

should be highlighted on displays where appropriate. The approximate journey times should be linked in with reliability monitoring to ensure that the times given are realistic.

- 3.5.10 At displays at shelters, information about transport facilities in the vicinity as well as a simple schematic coloured route map could be provided.
- 3.5.11 The flag at each stop needs to display both the name of that stop and the Traveline telephone number. This will enable Traveline staff to identify precise locations for enquires. An audit will need to be undertaken to identify existing flag/information provision.
- 3.5.12 Service information should be updated at least 7 days before any changes and the number of service changes should be restricted. A regular inspection/replacement programme should be established to monitor the provision of 'at stop' information.
- 3.5.13 RTPI at bus stops was identified as a possible area where future investment could be targeted. However, the Scrutiny Committee consultation revealed that Members felt basic information solutions, such as up to date and clear bus stop timetables, should be established before more high-tech information solutions could be introduced. For the older population within the Vale, larger writing on timetables at bus stops was requested.

On-bus Information

- 3.5.14 Information Posters could be provided on buses to advertise changes to services, while a Public Address system could be installed on the buses to provide audible information for the visually impaired. Consideration may also be given to other audio-visual equipment such as PIDS (Passenger information Displays). Table 3.1 summarises current and future suggestions of information provision.

3.6 Publicity

- 3.6.1 It is important that regular press releases are issued identifying service revisions and promoting improvements made by the Council. Of particular note is the network of Village Divert-a-bus services, which operate on a flexible route/timetable, which increases the importance of providing accurate information.

3.7 Monitoring of Information Strategy

- 3.7.1 Monitoring of the Information Strategy should take place regularly. This could be undertaken by the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Planning and Transportation Policy team.

Table 3.1 Current and Suggested Future Information Provision

Journey Stage	Information Requirement	Current Provision	Action	Action Ref:
Planning	Web based service/timetable details.	Traveline site with supplementary authority site for local information.	Maintain existing arrangements.	ISP1
	Telephone enquiry service.	Provided by Traveline through Local Authority/operator support. Consultation feedback identified issues of cost and extended call wait times. The publicity Transport tema also answer telephone queries on bus services.	Maintain Traveline as service provider, raising issues identified during consultation to develop improvements. Liase with operators/user groups on Traveline performance.	ISP2
	Printed leaflets/guides.	Variable provision - lack of co-ordinated approach.	Consider publication of Area wide map/guide for all operators/services.	ISP3
		Lack of local distribution points.	Establish additional distribution points including libraries and leisure centres.	ISP4
	Information kiosks.	One operator maintained facility at Kings Square, Barry - with limited opening hours.	Identify scope to install manned or automated information points at key interchanges.	ISP5
At Stop Information	Bus flag - containing: service numbers, stop name and Traveline contact details.	Provided by operators, with variable provision.	Audit existing flag/information provision and upgrade under bus corridor improvement package.	ISSI1
	Timetable case, fitted with printed, current timetable information to DDA standards.	Variable provision - lack of co-ordinated approach.		ISSI2
	Real Time Passenger Information with facility for providing audible information for visually impaired.	No bus based RTPi currently available in the Vale.	Examine opportunities to provide RTPi on Strategic corridors once all existing stops have been upgraded with printed information. Consider extension of Cardiff Bus System to Penarth/Barry.	ISSI3
Journey	Promotion of Traveline contact details.	All buses carry Traveline details.	Maintain and monitor existing arrangements.	ISJ1
	Carriage of printed timetables on-board, with advertisement of services changes at least 7 days prior to implementation.	Variable provision.	Press releases to be issued.	ISJ2
	On-board PA system/display to inform passengers of delays. Visual display on buses informing passengers of the next stop.	No bus based system at present.	Part of the bus corridor improvement package – liase with operators.	ISJ3
	Timetable information to be kept up-to-date.	Repair/maintenance of timetable information is undertaken on an ad-hoc basis.	Establish a regular inspection/ replacement programme of 'at stop' information. Service information should be updated at least 7 days before any changes.	ISJ4
General Publicity	Issue of regular press releases to local media.	Press releases issued to local media and published on the Council's Website.	Enhance existing arrangements.	ISGP1
	Publicity for Village/Divert-a-bus bus network.	Variable.	Enhance existing arrangements.	ISGP2